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State Capitol North, 325 Don Gaspar, Suite 200
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501
PH: (505) 986-4591 FAX: (505) 986-4338
<http://legis.state.nm.us/lcs/lesc/lescdefault.asp>



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August 9, 2006

MEMORANDUM

TO: Legislative Education Study Committee

FR: Pamela Herman

**RE: STAFF BRIEF: NEW MEXICO FIRST TOWN HALL ON HIGHER
EDUCATION**

The 2006 Interim Workplan of the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) includes a presentation on the recommendations of the April 2006 New Mexico First Town Hall on Higher Education.

Issues:

- On April 20-22, 2006, New Mexico First convened a Town Hall in Santa Fe entitled *Today's Students, Tomorrow's Workforce: A Town Hall on Higher Education*.
- Almost 200 people took part in the three-day event, with 122 active participants including representatives of public and private two and four year institutions of higher education; public and private K-12 schools; key business and industry groups; tribal, local and state government; and nonprofit organizations; as well as interested community members and high school and college students.
- New Mexico First provided participants prior to the Town Hall with a background report that depicted four alternative future "scenarios" based on research, existing data, and stakeholder input. The scenarios described the higher education choices available to two hypothetical New Mexican students in the year 2026 resulting from differing amounts of resources and innovation in higher education system development. The scenarios served as a springboard for discussion at the Town Hall.

- The Town Hall process resulted in 18 consensus recommendations which the final report summarized and organized into the following five policy areas (see Attachment):
 - increasing standards and collaboration;
 - reforming New Mexico's system of higher education;
 - linking education to economic and labor trends;
 - funding; and
 - programs to help students.
- Before the Town Hall began, New Mexico First identified two Implementation Team leaders: former Governor Gary Carruthers of New Mexico State University and Mr. Mike DeWitte of Sandia National Laboratories.

Background:

- Established in 1986 by New Mexico Senators Jeff Bingaman and Pete Domenici, New Mexico First is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization established “to effect positive change in our state by addressing fundamental policy issues through the Town Hall process, creating a statewide network of informed and caring citizens, and leading New Mexicans to take action.”
- New Mexico First has five stated goals:
 1. to identify fundamental policy issues;
 2. to find positive solutions to the problems posed by those issues;
 3. to effect solutions through the dissemination of information;
 4. to identify, inform, and motivate leaders for New Mexico; and
 5. to create a statewide network of informed and caring New Mexicans.
- New Mexico First conducts two types of Town Halls: customized Town Halls for clients on a variety of topics important to New Mexico and its own annual statewide Town Hall in the spring.
- According to New Mexico First, “the Town Hall model is a very specific consensus building process developed by Arizona Town Halls and modified by New Mexico First. Participants meet for two days in small groups, each led by a discussion leader and recorder trained by New Mexico First. As reports from the groups' deliberations are collected during this period, they are synthesized by the master recorder” into a draft Consensus Report. At a final plenary session, Town Hall participants discuss, debate, and amend the draft document until consensus is reached. The Consensus Final Report is distributed widely as part of the implementation process.

Presenters:

Mr. Mike DeWitte, Co-chair, Implementation Team, New Mexico First Town Hall on Higher Education; and Ms. Heather Balas, Associate Director and President-designee of New Mexico First, will present the recommendations of the NM First Town Hall on Higher Education and will describe the steps the team is taking to implement the recommendations of the Town Hall.

Questions the committee may wish to consider:

1. What is the time frame for implementing the recommendations of the Town Hall on Higher Education?
2. Which Town Hall recommendations, if any, involve expanding existing policy initiatives or programs, and which require brand new initiatives or policy directions?
3. Are the Town Hall recommendations mutually contingent, or may some be implemented even if others are not?
4. Which, if any, of the Town Hall recommendations require legislative action to implement? Will the Implementation Team be proposing any recommendations for the 2008 session?

Town Hall Recommendations

The following table summarizes the recommendations developed by the town hall participants. The recommendations have been edited to make them consistent in format and style. In some cases, very similar recommendations have been combined in this table. To view the original language developed during the actual town hall, see Appendix B on page 11. Please see the legend on page 9 for the acronyms used.

#	Central Idea	Details	Deadline
Increasing Standards and Collaboration			
1	Raise P-20 academic standards so that NM students can compete with students from other places and can meet the needs of employers.	The standards should be developed jointly by HED, PED, and their schools. The standards should apply to high schools (ensuring college readiness), college degrees, and certification programs. They should draw on national and international benchmarks.	April 2007
2	HED and PED should collaborate to establish one educational vision, measurable standards to achieve that vision, and a comprehensive database to track progress and enable the exchange of data.	The vision should call for all students to navigate a P-20 career path. It should also honor NM's diverse culture, connect to economic development, and involve stakeholders in its development. The standards should include learning outcomes and performance metrics. K-12 standards should align with higher education needs. HED should provide financial inducements, best practices, and ongoing assessments. It should also establish uniform criteria of transferable courses.	April 2007
3	NM's educational system should use a P-20 approach that includes school and community-based programs.	School guidance counselor outreach and school programs (such as peer mentoring) should support all families but emphasize first generation and at-risk students. Community programs should attempt to reengage students who are no longer in school.	
4	Establish and maintain a statewide education system.	Attention should be paid to 1) strong public awareness through ongoing conversations in order to raise awareness and support and 2) alignment with statewide economic development and workforce development priorities to increase the value of education in our society. A state constitutional amendment may be required.	Dec 2007
Reforming NM's Systems of Higher Education			
5	Promote stakeholder discussions about a statewide system of governance and coordination of higher education.	The effort should be led by HED, the governor, and the legislature. The effort should involve stakeholders including workforce development and business people, and it may call for a state constitutional amendment.	2009
6	Coordinate efforts and eliminate duplication among government and community organizations involved in the educational system.	All stakeholder organizations should take part in this process. Participants may include PED, HED, Dept of Labor, Dept of Corrections, Dept of Health/School-Based Health Centers, Children Youth and Families Department, Juvenile Probation and Parole, DVR, YDI, OWTD, SER, National Indian Youth Council, Job Corps, and others.	
Linking Education to Economic and Labor Trends			
7	Establish a strategic plan enabling NM students to develop a career path through the P-20 educational system that aligns with economic development priorities, if they choose.	The planning process will include the governor, legislature, and tribes. The plan will be developed with input from a neutral board. These student paths will guide students toward whatever education they may need.	April 2007
8	Use long-term labor force projections to encourage students to follow career pathways that will meet projected labor needs and fill high-value jobs of the future.	The Coordination Oversight Committee, tribal leadership, and funding agencies should take the lead in this effort, with shared data by private industry, the education sector, and the government. An industry/government task force should be established to research, fund, and implement apprenticeship and internship programs to provide the hard and soft skills businesses need.	April 2007 for task force component
9	Implement a statewide work-based assessment (e.g., Workkeys)	The OWTD and PED should collaborate on this project, using the assessment to measure education and work readiness among high school and college students and guide educational work.	

Funding			
10	Change the higher education funding formula to place greater emphasis on student performance.	Two possible approaches: 1) Develop a strategic investment plan that changes the higher education funding formula from a solely quantitative to a more qualitative model. The effort would be convened by the LESC, the LFC and the DFA. Those parties would invite representation from the Public School Funding Formula Task Force, the Higher Education Formula Task Force, Tribal Governments, and the business sector. 2) In the short-term, state officials would change the funding formula from growth-based to performance-based. In the long-term, they would dedicate dollars to students (P-20), not institutions. Payment might occur at the end of the year, based on successful completion.	Start in July 2006
11	Increase financial aid for college students.	The HED should request funding from the legislature for merit, need, and non-need based aid to encourage students to finish degrees and certificates.	
12	Increase educator salaries.	The legislature has already begun this work and should continue to implement increases in educator salaries so that the state can retain a quality educational workforce.	
Programs to Help Students			
13	Evaluate contributors and barriers to student success, using lessons learned to recommend new strategies and services.	The evaluation should occur annually for three years. The research should be conducted by the OEA and the LESC, in collaboration with the PED and HED.	
14	Create a statewide support network that links educational and economic development support for all communities, particularly rural ones.	This work may take place in physical locations (i.e., schools) or virtual locations (i.e., online), but all of them should involve collaborative, two-way learning, rather than one-way lecture.	
15	Strengthen programs that develop and support P-20 life and career-readiness skills.	Programs might include goal-setting, decision-making, and alerts about available services. Efforts should target all students, emphasizing first generation and at-risk individuals.	
16	The Governor, tribal leaders, and business leaders should conduct a major public awareness campaign on the value of education.	The planning process should include additional state leaders. The campaign should create a sense of urgency about the need for students to complete school. It should also feature students of all ages and the economic value of education.	
17	Support multiple learning styles through faculty professional development.	HED should collaborate with P-20 faculty groups to identify and create a framework for teaching teachers to promote active learning. This collaboration should also establish accountability and assessment teams to determine effectiveness and level of innovation of subject-specific methods.	2008

#	Central Idea	Details	Deadline
Technology			
18	Establish a statewide high-speed digital network infrastructure to support learning and collaboration.	Two approaches: 1) The Governor should create a task force to plan, create, and activate a network infrastructure to support collaborative P-20 education, workforce development, and business and industry. The network should use best practices, including 2-way communication, decentralized technical and instructional resources, teaching and learning communities, and business and training development. The NM legislature should appropriate adequate funding each year for 10 years to: 1) design and build an interoperable distance learning infrastructure; 2) facilitate collaboration among higher education institutions and industry; 3) provide faculty development / training; and 4) develop appropriate courses at all educational levels. 2) HED and PED, in cooperation with all appropriate state and educational institutions, should develop a plan to use technology to bridge the gap to provide optimal learning opportunities and to create a free reliable high-speed broadband network throughout New Mexico to expand access to educational resources and counter rising transportation and environmental concerns. This plan could include virtual college, cyber-schools, and online workforce development efforts.	

Glossary of Acronyms Used

DFA = New Mexico Department of Finance & Administration
DVR = New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
HED = New Mexico Higher Education Department
K-12 = schooling, kindergarten through high school graduation
LESC = New Mexico Legislative Education Study Committee
LFC = New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee

OEA = New Mexico Office of Educational Accountability
OWTD = New Mexico Office of Workforce Training & Development
P-20 = all formal schooling, preschool through graduate school
PED = New Mexico Public Education Department
SER = SER, Santa Fe Jobs for Progress (nonprofit)
YDI = Youth Development, Inc. (nonprofit)

Implementation of the Town Hall Recommendations

This New Mexico First town hall was not a destination, but rather was a launching point for statewide change. In order to ensure that these recommendations will be acted upon, New Mexico First identified Implementation Team leaders before the town hall began by asking two participants with leadership experience and influence to fill these roles. Former governor Gary Carruthers of New Mexico State University and Mike DeWitte of Sandia National Labs are heading up the implementation team, which is already 42 members strong. The implementation team is composed of participants who wanted to be involved in taking action on

the recommendations that were so thoughtfully prepared during the three-day process.

During the town hall, Governor Carruthers aimed to see policy recommendations and appropriation requests ready for the 60-day legislative session in January 2007. For this goal to be met, significant legwork must be completed by October 2006. "This is not going to be a slow moving process," promised Carruthers.

Updates on the progress of the Implementation Team will be provided to the town hall participants.